

BORDER ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION COMMISSION

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
Funds	2,202	2,120	2,249	129

FY 2008 Actual reflects the rescission of 0.81% provided by the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-161, Division J).

Overview

The Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADB) are binational organizations created by the Governments of the United States and Mexico under a side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement, in order to help address the environmental infrastructure needs in the border region between both countries.

The “*Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank*” (the BECC/NADB Charter), was executed in 1993 and amended through Protocol of Amendment signed on November 25 and 26, 2002, which entered into effect on August 6, 2004. The BECC is located in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

The mission of the Border Environment Cooperative Commission (BECC) is to work to preserve, protect and enhance human health and the environment of the U. S. – Mexico border region, by strengthening cooperation among interested parties and supporting sustainable projects through a transparent bi-national process in close coordination with the NADB (North American Development Bank), Federal, State, local agencies, the private sector, and civil society. BECC was created to assist border communities in developing environmental infrastructure projects to meet certification requirements to be eligible to receive funding from the NADB, or other institutions. The goal of BECC’s certification requirements is to ensure that projects provide environmental and human health benefits. These projects have to be technically feasible and affordable as well as capable of being operated over the long term, while ensuring transparency and public participation. BECC is authorized to work on the U.S.-Mexico Border up to 100 km north on the U.S. side and 300 km south on the Mexican side .

In order to carry out its purpose, the BECC/NADB Charter grants the BECC the following functions:

- With their concurrence, assist States and localities and other public entities and private investors in: coordinating, preparing, developing, implementing and overseeing environmental infrastructure projects in the border region, including the design, sitting and other technical aspects; analyzing the financial feasibility or the environmental aspects of the environmental infrastructure projects; evaluating social and economic benefits of the projects; and organizing, developing and arranging public and private financing for environmental infrastructure projects in the border region; and
- Certify, by a decision of its Board of Directors, environmental infrastructure projects in the border region to be submitted for financing to the NADB, or to other sources of financing that request such certification.

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The BECC/NADB Charter defines an environmental infrastructure project as a project that will “prevent, control or reduce environmental pollutants or contaminants, improve the drinking water supply, or protect flora and fauna so as to improve human health, promote sustainable development, or contribute to a higher quality of life”. Based on this definition, the specific sectors that BECC and NADB currently address are the following:

- Water Pollution
- Wastewater Treatment
- Municipal Solid Waste
- Water Conservation
- Industrial and Hazardous Waste
- Domestic hook-ups to Water and Wastewater Systems
- Recycling and Waste Reduction

* The sectors listed above are given priority by the BECC/NADB Charter

- Air Quality
- Clean and Efficient Energy
- Public Transportation
- Municipal Planning and Development, including Water Management

Performance

The work of the BECC continues to support the Department of State’s strategic goal of Promoting Economic Growth and Prosperity through three programs (1) Technical Assistance Program (2) Public Involvement and Public Outreach Process and (3) Municipal Strategic Planning. In order to set performance goals for the institution, an administrative tool called “Balanced Scorecard” (BSC) was introduced. The BSC is a modern management method for measuring an organization's performance parameters. The BSC design translates the organization’s Vision, Values, Mission and Strategy into performance indicators, which can be used to measure the degree in which the strategic objectives are accomplished. It assists in monitoring the fulfillment of strategic objectives, expenses, costs, productivity, customer satisfaction, internal processes, employee motivation, and training.

The BECC's BSC contains 18 strategic objectives and 48 performance indicators; 15 of the performance indicators (corresponding to 11 strategic objectives) were selected in a prioritization process and were carried out in 2007. In addition, the objectives of the Quality Management System are also perfectly attuned to the objectives and indicators of the BSC. This effort resulted in BECC organizing its efforts into seven activities, which are:

Technical Assistance:

- Technical Assistance and Project Certification
- Environmental Project Management
- Strategic Planning
- BECC Performance Improvement and General Support

Public Involvement and Public Outreach Process:

- Knowledge Management Program
- Public Participation and Capacity Building Program

Municipal Strategic Planning

- Municipal Planning

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Program Description

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The role of the BECC is to assist border communities in the development and certification of high priority environmental infrastructure projects by providing technical assistance services such as engineering analysis, project development and design, financial feasibility studies, community participation, environmental assessment and sustainable development. In addition to providing project development expertise, the BECC mobilizes the resources from U.S. and Mexican environmental agencies and other sources, and provides access to the financial resources of the NADB or other funding sources requiring such certification.

The BECC assists the U.S.-Mexico border's neediest communities that without this assistance would otherwise be incapable of obtaining financial resources, by providing grant funding for planning, development, and design of necessary, complex environmental infrastructure projects. BECC commits resources that enable border communities to undertake initial project development activities and also facilitates subsequent detailed technical work necessary to formulate high quality projects that can meet the intent of the certification process.

Technical Assistance and Project Certification

The purpose of the Technical Assistance and Project Certification is to offer technical services and/or financial assistance to help project sponsors effectively implement high-quality project development efforts and achieve certification for critical environmental infrastructure projects.

Environmental Project Management

The purpose of the Environmental Project Management Program is to utilize BECC's leadership and institutional capacities to create an opportunity to enhance coordination among stakeholders and strengthen regional commitment to environmental activities, resulting in greater efficiencies and effectiveness for the project beneficiaries and related programs.

Strategic Planning

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Program is to identify needs, develop/prioritize solutions, and optimize resources to achieve local, state and regional environmental and human health goals. This program includes environmental infrastructure planning by region and by sector, as well as strategy development and project management for some project types in new sectors, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy. As a related function, this program also encompasses the implementation of the results measurement system for projects, specifically for post-implementation review and monitoring tasks, including activities such as the recently initiated project close-out process.

BECC Performance Improvements and General Support

The purpose of the Performance Improvement is to identify, develop, and implement institutional improvements to optimize its human and financial resources, enhancing its capacity to achieve high-quality products and services. In addition the General Support activity is to provide responsive and high quality services important to the daily operations of the BECC.

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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS

Public Participation and Capacity Building

The purpose of the Public Participation and Capacity Building Program is to provide a foundation for sustainable development along the border through efforts aimed at inspiring community-based support for a project, providing transparency in each border initiative and strengthening the institutional capacity of border communities and utility providers.

One of the BECC's greatest successes is its public participation requirement. Public participation activities are required to ensure broad community support for projects that are being considered for certification. The establishment of active, local steering committees is a key element of this process that provides transparency and access to project information, the involvement of local organizations in the decision-making process, and the presentation of projects in public forums for discussion.

Knowledge Management

The purpose of the Knowledge Management Program is to create effective communication tools to document conditions existing in the border region, which have been identified through the coordinated efforts of BECC and other border stakeholders for information exchange to all interested parties. Information availability and accessibility are critical to facilitate the achievement of environmental and human health objectives in the border region. In addition to border communities and government stakeholders, there are a variety of other formal and informal mechanisms developed to manage border issues. Each requires information about the current conditions in the region in order to further their role in addressing target issues. Information exchange is also important to prevent the duplication of efforts and foster the opportunity to build upon the works of others

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Municipal Planning

The lack of municipal planning in many communities along the US-Mexico Border is primarily due to lack of resources.

Justification of Request

For FY 2010, the BECC is requesting a total of \$2,249,000 from the U.S. for its operating budget. This level will allow the BECC to continue supporting the Department of State in achieving its strategic goal of improving health and environmental conditions for the U.S.-Mexico border region.

The BECC's request for FY 2010 is \$129,000 above the FY2009 funding level. The U.S. portion of the increase in BECC's budget for FY2010 will be utilized to fund costs of living increases and develop a new strategy for municipal planning program.

Technical Assistance Program - \$49,000

The U.S. portion of the increase in BECC's budget for FY2010 will be utilized to fund costs of living increases.

Municipal Strategic Planning - \$80,000

The increase of \$80,000 requested in FY2010 will be applied to fund technical assistance in developing new strategies for municipal/county development, considering the most advanced

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urban planning criteria available and based on natural resources availability, local and regional ecosystems characteristics, land use patterns, governance, and local socioeconomic trends and problems.

Funds by Program Activity

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
Public Involvement and Public Outreach Process	75	75	75	0
Technical Assistance Program	2,127	2,045	2,174	129
Total	2,202	2,120	2,249	129

Funds by Object Class

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
1100 Personnel Compensation	1194	1,157	1,128	(29)
1200 Personnel Benefits	398	386	282	(104)
2100 Travel & Trans of Persons	96	83	70	(13)
2300 Rents, Comm & Utilities	192	187	160	(27)
2500 Other Services	212	208	524	316
2600 Supplies and Materials	82	74	85	11
3100 Personal Property	28	25	0	(25)
Total	2,202	2,120	2,249	129